

ACQUISITION EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY AT THE COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE

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Editor's Note: In an article in the July-August 1998 issue of Army RD&A magazine (Page 38), LTC Steve Boshears described the initiation of acquisition education and training at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC). This article updates developments addressed at that time.

Introduction

In the past, selection for the resident Command and General Staff Officer Course (CGSOC) was a mixed blessing for acquisition officers. While resident selection represented a significant mid-career achievement, acquisition officers knew that the year at Fort Leavenworth, KS, delayed them for a year from fulfilling acquisition career requirements mandated by Congress in 1990 through the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA). DAWIA required that officers achieve "certification" to qualify to work in acquisition

positions. To accomplish this, officers completed appropriate college-level business and/or quantitative course requirements, attended specialized courses offered through the Defense Acquisition University (DAU), and gained multiple years of acquisition experience in specifically approved acquisition positions. However, the resident CGSOC curriculum did not include certification-compliant business and/or quantitative courses or DAU-equivalent acquisition courses. In 1996, Director for Acquisition Career Management (DACM) LTG Ronald V. Hite recognized this problem and initiated a plan to bring acquisition training to officers attending the resident CGSOC.

Area Of Concentration

Before 1996, the resident CGSOC curriculum required officers to select an area of concentration (AOC) based on their branch, functional area, and career

goals. This process resembles a university student declaring a "major." Each AOC had specific elective course requirements. Officers could select from one of the following disciplines: combined arms studies, combat service support studies, joint and multinational studies, or general studies. Typically, acquisition officers were compelled to select an AOC that was aligned with their basic branch rather than their acquisition specialty.

The AETP

In July 1996, the DACM and the CGSC Deputy Commandant jointly signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that provided guidelines for establishing an Acquisition AOC, an in-house acquisition graduate degree program, and a state-of-the-art acquisition classroom. In addition, the MOA provided guidelines to acquire the personnel necessary to instruct and supervise. As such, the MOA resulted in establishment of the Acquisition Education and Training Program (AETP).

The Acquisition AOC

Under the Acquisition AOC, officers select from a full complement of DAU-equivalent and acquisition-related courses. DAU-equivalent courses enable most acquisition officers to complete the education requirements necessary to achieve DAWIA Level II certification. In addition to DAU-equivalent courses, two non-DAU courses are offered to all Acquisition Corps officers.

Table 1.
Acquisition AOC Courses, AY 99/00

- Fundamentals of Contracting (CON 101)
- Fundamentals of Contract Pricing (CON 104)
- Intermediate Contract Pricing (CON 204)
- Government Contract Law (CON 210)
- Intermediate Systems Acquisition (ACQ 201)
- Intermediate Information Systems Acquisition (IRM 201)
- Advanced Acquisition Seminar
- Introduction to Simulation-Based Acquisition

Table 2.
AGDP Curricula, AY 00/01

M.A., Procurement and Acquisition Management	M.A., Computer Resources and Information Management
Fall Term I	Fall Term I
PROC 5270 – Acquisition Management	COMP 5920 – Information Systems Applications
Fall Term II	Fall Term II
PROC 5220 – System Procurement and Project Management	COMP 5940 – Project Management of Information Systems
Spring Term I	Spring Term I
PROC 5810 – Acquisition Law	COMP 5960 – Systems Analysis, Design, and Implementation
PROC 5820 – Operations Management	COMP 5970 – Database Management
PROC 5830 – Pricing	COMP 5980 – Network and Telecommunications Management
Spring Term II	Spring Term II
PROC 5840 – Negotiations	COMP 5200 – Computer Security
PROC 5850 – Logistics	COMP 5220 – Internet Management Applications
PROC 6000 – Integrated Studies in Procurement and Acquisition Management	COMP 6000 – Integrated Studies in Computer Resources

The Advanced Acquisition Seminar and the Introduction to Simulation-Based Acquisition Course are unique to the CGSOC curriculum. The former has a guest lecturer format, bringing together senior DOD military and civilian acquisition leaders and representatives from the Defense industry to Fort Leavenworth to share ideas with CGSOC students. The Introduction to Simulation-Based Acquisition Course allows students to familiarize themselves with current DOD and Army policy on use of modeling and simulation for materiel acquisition, and how to apply it to a notional major Defense acquisition program. Table 1 includes a list of the Acquisition AOC courses offered during academic year (AY) 99/00 at CGSC.

The AGDP

In 1997, Webster University was competitively selected to provide an Acquisition Graduate Degree Program (AGDP) for acquisition officers attending

the resident CGSOC. The terms of the AGDP allow students to acquire either an M.A. in procurement and acquisition management or a master's in computer resources and information management. To ensure that students successfully complete both the AGDP Program and the CGSOC, the MOA between the CGSC Deputy Commandant and the DACM allows most of the AGDP courses to count concurrently toward CGSOC elective requirements.

Both students and the Acquisition Corps benefit from the AGDP. Students benefit because the Acquisition Corps fully funds the program, and the curriculum is tailored to the government acquisition process. An additional move to attend a fully funded graduate degree program is not required. In addition, the program runs concurrently and at the same location as the CGSOC, thus students can return to acquisition assignments immediately after CGSOC graduation. The Acquisition Corps benefits because the costs of providing this program concurrently with the CGSOC are

significantly less than transferring and funding an officer for an 18-month master's degree program at a separate institution. In addition, the trained officer is available immediately following CGSOC graduation.

A Webster University degree requires the completion of 36 semester hours. Students may transfer 12 hours from the resident CGSOC. Students may complete the remaining 24 semester hours by successfully completing evening Webster University courses at Fort Leavenworth throughout the academic year. To date, 41 acquisition officers have taken advantage of the AGDP through Webster University at CGSC. Table 2 shows the AGDP curricula offered during AY 00/01. Webster University AGDP courses offered during spring terms I and II are considered CGSOC electives.

Classroom Facilities

In addition to upgrading educational opportunities for acquisition officers, the MOA between the DACM and the CGSC Deputy Commandant established guidelines for a state-of-the-art multimedia

distance learning classroom at CGSC. Under the terms of the MOA, the CGSC would oversee the room renovation, to include providing partitions for subdividing classroom space, dropping the ceiling, installing improved lighting and new carpet, painting, and performing electrical upgrades. The DACM would oversee room furnishings as well as the installation and maintenance of the multimedia equipment, hardware, and software. The room would include student workstations equipped with Microsoft Windows NT and Microsoft Office Suite, an Intranet network server, a video teleconferencing (VTC) system, and an instructor's station. The instructor's station would include a VCR, an opaque and transparent document projector, and a remote-controlled projection system linked to the instructor's workstation. In fall 1999, all renovations were completed, all equipment was installed, and classroom 17 in Bell Hall became the new home of acquisition education and training at CGSC.

Distance Learning Capabilities

With the renovation complete and equipment online, classroom 17 exemplifies the full range of available instructional environments. In addition to routinely using the room for traditional lectures using projected presentations, instructors can conduct distance learning using student workstations and/or VTC equipment. For example, AGDP distance learning courses in AY 00/01 are being conducted in classrooms in Kansas City, MO; San Antonio, TX; and at Whiteman Air Force Base near Kansas City, MO.

Web-Based Learning

Network accommodations within the room also allow students to participate in Web-based instruction, including those provided by DAU. During the first two terms of AY 99/00, more than 30 CGSOC acquisition officers completed Web-based DAU courses such as Fundamentals of Systems Acquisition (ACQ 101) and Basic Information Systems Acquisition (IRM 101).

Computer-Based Training

With the technology the Acquisition Corps has provided through classroom 17 and its workstations, students can now participate in several computer-based training (CBT) courses that provide training in Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office Suite applications. As a service to the CGSC, the Acquisition Corps also purchased "Smart Force" CBT software. Smart Force provides online training in 20 separate modules for various logistic support systems. The program went online in January 2000. This CBT has serviced 176 students accessing more than 900 courses per month.

Other CGSC Opportunities

The CGSOC's core curriculum provides officers with an in-depth study of the tactical and operational levels of war. In addition to the core curriculum, acquisition officers can participate in the annual Prairie Warrior exercise. Here they can serve in battlefield acquisition positions such as contingency contracting officers at division, corps, and echelons above corps levels. Officers with significant prior acquisition training can research acquisition-related topics. Selected officers may take the CGSC Partnership With Industry (PWI) Course sponsored by the CGSC Department of Logistics and Resource Operations. The PWI Course links student teams with local industries in the Kansas City metropolitan area to study and solve real-world business problems. The Acquisition Corps officer's curriculum at CGSC can also include writing research papers ranging from 5 to 10 pages or preparing a thesis leading to a master's in military art and science.

Postgraduate DAU Onsite Courses

Immediately after graduating from CGSOC, acquisition officers can stay at Fort Leavenworth and participate in several onsite DAU courses, including Intermediate Contracting (CON 202); Intermediate Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering

(SYS 201); and Intermediate Test and Evaluation (TST 202). The Contingency Contracting Course (CON 234) is scheduled to be added to the AY 01/02 course listings.

The Future

CGSC provides a state-of-the-art curriculum and learning environment, and the Army Acquisition Corps is poised to incorporate any appropriate technological or procedural advancement that might enhance its officers' education. Distance learning and Web-based and computer-based training techniques continue to evolve. The challenge will be to use these resources while balancing the synergy that students experience through interaction, group work, sharing, and dialogue with classmates and instructors. Whatever the future holds, acquisition officers slated to attend the resident CGSOC are certain to have a wide range of training and educational opportunities that will prepare them to assume the most challenging assignments the Acquisition Corps has to offer.

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